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Continuities in the Formation of Russian Political Elites

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Abstract: *»Kontinuitäten der Elitenbildung der politischen Elite in Russland«*. The article investigates continuities in the formation and careers of political elites in post-Soviet Russia. Data on the recruitment and careers of MPs (from 1993 until 2003), cabinet ministers (1991 until 2011) and governors (from 1991 until 2011) were used. We identified a partial reproduction of the political elite which may be defined as reproduction circulation. The first form is structural reproduction that is evident in continuities of the socio-demographic profile of political elites. The second-strongest form of path dependency is functional reproduction that was found in career paths of political elites. Finally, individual reproduction was prominent. This reproduction should decrease over time, while functional and structural reproduction are likely to remain.

Keywords: *nomenklatura*, parliament, cabinet, governor, elite, path dependency.

For many, the end of the 1980s symbolised the beginning of the new era. Political, economical, and social changes took place in virtually all member countries of the Soviet Union, although with different magnitudes. During the later years of the Soviet Union, the careers of many political elites, i.e., members of the privileged *nomenklatura* system, met an abrupt end.

Conflicts between orthodox and moderate Communists resulted in the attempted coup d'etat of 1991 and the bloody shootings at the White House (i.e. the seat of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic) in 1993. The first president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, who belonged to the moderate wing of the Communist Party, substantially changed the composition of political elites by appointing loyal candidates to different positions at the national and regional levels. The turnover of political elites in the late 1980s and early 1990s raised many questions regarding the consequences of these actions. How 'new' was the new political elite of post-Soviet Russia? Did it include many novices or was it just "an old wine in a new bottle" (Hanley et al. 1995)? Moreover, did the selection principles for elite positions change upon the introduction of multi-party and competitive elections?

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Theoretically, the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union on the fate of political elites may be explained through path dependency theory. The path dependency approach traces current developments back to previous decisions and underlines the crucial importance of the initial situation on further development (Pierson 2000). According to this approach, an established path holds an advantage over other alternatives and can be reinforced through increasing returns, i.e., positive feedback processes (Mahoney 2000). Therefore, the relative benefits of the chosen path increase over time and make it difficult to reverse the path of development.

When applying this approach to elite formation in post-Soviet Russia, path dependency to the Soviet era is expected. We might expect two main forms of path dependency: the first is a simple large-scale reproduction of elites and the creation of a quasi-nomenklatura system of elite selection. The second is partial reproduction of elites and selection principles. It is important to underline that the path dependency approach, with its self-reinforcing aspects, is difficult to directly apply to Russia because institutional persistence was not provided. To test these hypotheses, data on the recruitment and careers of MPs (from 1993 until 2003), cabinet ministers (1991 until 2011) and governors (from 1991 until 2011) were used.

The article consists of three parts. In the first, continuities in the formation of political elites in Russia are analysed with regard to the socio-demographic profile of elite members. The second part discusses the survival of Soviet politicians in post-Soviet Russia. The third part deals with the continuities of career paths.

Structural Continuities in the Formation of Political Elites in Russia

Female Representation: Politics is a Male-Oriented Profession

The overrepresentation of men was a feature of Soviet politics. In the 1925 Congress of People's Deputies, there were only three women among the 106 members elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party (CC). During the early Soviet years, females were also underrepresented among Congress delegates who participated in the CC elections (Mawdsley and White 2000, 244). Only 4% of political elites recruited after the Purges (1938-1953) were female, which was an increase of approximately 1% compared to the elites recruited in the early Stalin period. However, "it was as high as this only because a number of women, exemplary dairymaids and the like, were co-opted onto the CC; they were 'token members'" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 109). Females represented the minority of rank-and-file members. This proportion declined from 16.5% in 1934 to 14.5% in 1939, then increased to almost 20%

in 1952 and remained stable during the 1950s and 1960s (Rigby 1968, 360-361). The policy of recruiting 'token' females continued under Khrushchev. Although there were 11 women in the CC under Khrushchev (1953-64), they were not appointed to leading positions and only rarely to the Politburo. The only female member, Yekaterina Furtseva, left the Politburo in 1961.

Under Brezhnev's rule, 4% of leading Party positions were held by women, while 26.5% of the party rank-and-file members were female (Mawdsley and White 2000, 172). Gorbachev's perestroika sought for the advancement of females as an important step towards the transformation of the Soviet regime. This policy resulted in the recruitment of 33 women to the 1990 CC, thereby increasing the proportion of females to 8%. Moreover, female representation in the Politburo and Secretariat increased (Lentini 1993), and the proportion of females among rank-and-file members increased to 30% (Mawdsley and White 2000, 206, 253). In 1984, one third of the members of the 11th Supreme Soviet were women, but this proportion declined to 16% in 1989 and to only 6% in 1990 after the Supreme Soviet quota for female members was abolished. In general, over the entire Soviet period, females comprised only 5% of all CC members. The same proportion of women was recruited to the Secretariat of the Communist Party, while females represented only 2% of Politburo members (Mawdsley and White 2000, 255).

The post-Soviet political system was not any more female-friendly than that of the Soviet Union. Only 6.7% of the 1993 elite were women (Hanley et al. 1995, 653). The proportion of female MPs averaged only 11.6% across the six parliaments; furthermore, this is below the European and world averages (Palmieri 2011). In the sixth parliament elected in 2011, the proportion of female MPs was on par with that of the first parliament (13.7 and 13.6% respectively). According to comparative data on female MPs compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2011), the Russian parliament ranked 91st of 143 parliaments in this respect, situated between Djibouti (13.8%) and Grenada, Guatemala and Niger (13.3%).

There was also a pronounced absence of women in ministerial positions throughout the Soviet period. There was only one female minister in the first Soviet government (1917-1922), and only two women were appointed between 1923 and 1991 (Kochkina 1999). In Russian cabinets, women held 16 of 491 ministerial posts between 1991-2012, with only nine women accounting for all 16 posts. In the 20 years after the collapse of Communism, only one woman, Valentina Matvienko, has held a top leadership position – Vice Prime Minister. Another female minister, Elvira Nabiullina, was appointed as Minister of Economic Development in 2007. When appointed to the cabinet, women in Russia usually received health, culture, social affairs, or agriculture portfolios. The representation of females at the regional level was even worse than in the cabinet. From 1991 until 2010, there were 333 governors in all Russian regions (including 38 interim governors), but only four have been women.

The representation of females and the dynamics of their recruitment reveal three main continuities in the elite formation: first, women are still massively underrepresented in all elite subgroups. Second, high-ranking executive positions are particularly male-dominated, as was the case with cabinet and gubernatorial positions. Third, the formation of parliamentary elites followed the Soviet tradition of 'token' recruitment. Only a small proportion of women that had been recruited obtained a leading position in the parliament (e.g., a chair or vice-chair of a committee). Since 1993, the only example has been Lubov Sliska ("United Russia" parliamentary party group), who was a Deputy Speaker of the State Duma.

The underrepresentation of females in Russian politics may be explained by many factors: first, the attitudes of political parties toward female candidates are rather negative (Golosov 2001). Parties often refused to place female candidates in prominent positions on electoral lists. Female-oriented parties (e.g., "Women of Russia") were active and successful during the first years of post-Soviet Russia but suffered a dramatic defeat in the second elections and disappeared by 1999. Second, women who sought election to parliament had better chances of success when they stood in single-member districts (Moser 2001), which contradicted the common expectation that women are more successful if nominated via party lists. Third, the "United Russia" party pledged to increase female representation but largely nominated female celebrities such as athletes, actresses, and even a ballerina. These recruitment features again underlined the 'token' element in elite formation. Finally, traditional gender-role perceptions and the widespread attitude that politics is a male domain were also important factors that hindered the political activism of women (Anker 1998; Millar and Wolchik 1994). The most recent example of these traditional attitudes was provided by former Prime Minister Vladimir Putin during the International Female Forum, which took place in November 2011 in Russia. When deputy of the State Duma, Svetlana Zhurova, remarked that many employers prefer males because they think it is easier to work with men, Putin answered that this was not just a thought, but reality.

Ethnic Minority Representation: Russian-Dominated Elites

Females are not the only historically disadvantaged social group. Although the Soviet Union was multinational, political leadership was in the hands of Russians who were overrepresented in the CC. Over the entire Soviet period, 77% of the Secretariat members and 60% of the Politburo were Russians (Mawdsley and White 2000, 255). The Ukrainians, the second-largest group, accounted for 12% of the CC members, 9% of the Politburo, and 8% of the Secretariat. Interestingly, both Russians and Ukrainians were underrepresented in the CC compared to their share among rank-and-file party members (Mawdsley and White 2000, 255-56).

The representation of ethnic minorities was clearly a distinctive feature of elite structure until the mid-1930s. The elites under Lenin were ethnically diverse; Russians accounted for 52% of all CC members, and Jews for approximately 17% (Mawdsley and White 2000, 15, 54). Both Jews and Ukrainians were overrepresented in the CC compared to their share among rank-and-file members. In 1922, Jews and Ukrainians made up 5 and 6% of the membership respectively, while Russians accounted for 72% of party members (Mawdsley and White 2000, 15; Rigby 1968, 366). After Lenin's death, the proportion of Russians among the CC elites increased from 52 to 58%, while Jews accounted for 15% (Mawdsley and White 2000, 54). The period from 1917 until 1934 was characterised by maximum representation of minorities among the Soviet top elites. "Never again would the minorities have such influence, either in the top leadership or at the level of the Central Committee" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 54).

The Purges of 1936-38, initiated by Joseph Stalin, resulted in increased representation of Russians among the CC elites. The proportion of Russians reached 73% in 1951 and declined to 67% after Stalin's death (Mawdsley and White 2000, 108). In contrast, there was a massive decrease in the recruitment of Jews to CC elite positions; they accounted for only 1% of the post-Stalin elite (Mawdsley and White 2000, 109). After the Purges, the proportion of Ukrainians in the CC was higher than their proportion among rank-and-file members and the general population (Mawdsley and White 2000, 250).

Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, Ukrainians were particularly well-represented (Mawdsley and White 2000, 175). In contrast, the proportion of Russians among the CC elites fell from 67% in 1954 to 64% in 1961 (Mawdsley and White 2000, 141). The representation of Baltic nationalities also declined during Brezhnev's rule. In addition, ethnic minorities living in Russia were insufficiently represented in the CC over the entire Soviet period (Mawdsley and White 2000, 176).

Finally, during the Gorbachev period, the ethnic structure of the CC corresponded to that of the party members and the general population (Mawdsley and White 2000, 253). The proportion of Russians among the CC elites declined from 64% in 1961 to 52% in 1990, while their respective share among the party rank-and-file members was approximately 58%. In contrast, the proportion of Ukrainians increased to 12.3% of CC members, while Belorussians and Baltic nations accounted for 5 and 3% of CC members respectively (Mawdsley and White 2000, 206).

Over the four post-Soviet legislative terms, the proportion of Russians in the parliament was as high as 78%, fluctuating between 81% in 1995 and 72% in 2003. According to the 2010 general census (FBSS 2012), 80.9% of the population defined themselves as Russians. The largest ethnic group was the Tatars (3.9%), while the Ukrainians (1.4%) and the Bashkirs (1.2%) placed second and third. Using publically available data on the ethnic self-identification of

MPs, the proportion of these ethnic minorities in the Russian parliament did not match that of the general population. Between 1993 and 2003, the Tatars and Bashkirs accounted for 1.8 and 1% of MPs respectively. In contrast, Ukrainians have been clearly overrepresented in the State Duma, accounting for 5.9% of the members. The Belorussians were also overrepresented as they accounted for 1.5% of the parliamentarians and only 0.4% of the population (FBSS 2012).

Ethnic minorities were, however, well represented among governors (38%) and among cabinet ministers (approximately 37%). The majority of governors with ethnic background ruled the so-called ethnic regions (republics and autonomous regions). Knowledge of local conditions and wide networks were likely important for election to this high-ranking executive position (compare Francis and Kenny 2000).

Age Structure of Elites

The elites of the Soviet Union are often described as gerontocratic. However, this is only true for the later periods of the Soviet Union. The Bolshevik elite who gained power in 1917 was young; the average age was 33 years (Mawdsley and White 2000, 15). They had joined the Bolshevik Party before 1917 and were politically active during the Civil War (Mawdsley and White 2000, 54). In 1917-1934, CC elite in their thirties and early forties had the best opportunities for career advancement.

The elites recruited to the CC in the later years of Stalin's rule were even younger than the Bolsheviks (Mawdsley and White 2000, 247). The average age of elites under Khrushchev, however, was as high as 50 years, although "the median member in 1961 was still in his thirties and the median member of the wider society was in his twenties" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 250).

Under Brezhnev's rule, the elites could be considered gerontocratic. The average age of the CC members was 62 years by 1981. Compared to the CC elites, the People's Congress delegates were considerably younger; only 10% of the delegates were over 60 (Mawdsley and White 2000, 250). "The ageing of the Central Committee was not simply a result of the fact that the continuing membership was becoming more elderly; it was a result even more directly of the increasing age of new members" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 170). The CC members were also older than rank-and-file members (13% over 60) and the total population (less than 20% were over 60) (Mawdsley and White 2000, 253).

Under Gorbachev, many older elites were dismissed in favour of younger members (Hanley et al. 1995, 647). Thus, the average age of CC members fell from 58 years in 1986 to 49 years in 1990 (Mawdsley and White 2000, 253). While in 1988, 22% of *nomenklatura* members were over 60, this percentage decreased to approximately 13% by 1993 (Hanley et al. 1995, 653).

In post-Soviet Russia (1991 until 2011), the average age of ministers and MPs was 47 years and had increased for both groups; for cabinet ministers it increased from 46 years in 1991 to almost 51 years in 2011, and for parliamentarians from 45 years in 1993 to 50 years in 2007. The development of the age structure of political elites supported expectations with regard to the regime changes. The fact that the post-Soviet political elites were younger than those under Gorbachev revealed massive changes in political personnel. The lower echelons of the *nomenklatura* were presented with the opportunity to obtain higher positions after the collapse of Communism and many of them took it (Kryshtanovskaya and White 1996; Lane 1997). The average age of incumbents has increased, thereby increasing the average age of political elites. Another finding is the increasing age of newcomers to the elite, which corresponds to the average age of the elites minus approximately one year. This tendency indicates a stabilisation of the recruitment pool and matches the Western European pattern (Best 2007). In Western Europe, political parties do not specifically select candidates with particular personal characteristics, although candidates with high socio-economic status are often preferentially recruited to elite positions (Gallagher and Marsh 1988). Candidates between 45 and 50 years old have usually graduated from universities and accumulated different types of capital (e.g., financial, political and networks). This group is attractive for selectorates and electorate alike.

Highly Educated Elites

The Bolsheviks promoted equal rights and increased opportunities for the working class and peasantry in all spheres of life. The Soviet government substantially contributed to the increase in the literacy rate of the total population. While approximately 30% of the total population had a basic education at the end of the 19th century, by 1926 almost 61% of the population had received some basic education, and illiteracy was virtually eliminated by 1989 (Pachinzeva et al. 2003). The proportion of university students increased from ten students per 10.000 in 1914 to 206 students per 10.000 in 1985-1986 (Pachinzeva et al. 2003). The increase in the educational level of the general population might be explained by the expansion of the educational system in the Soviet Union.

The educational level of Soviet elites was, however, always higher than that of the general population. In the early years, the top leaders of the Soviet Union were particularly well-educated (Mosse 1968). Pipes (1994, 495-500) even described them as “the intellectuals”. This perception was partly true; indeed, 40% of the CC members in 1917-1923 had obtained a university degree, while another 33% had received some secondary education (Mawdsley and White 2000, 17). Compared to the top leaders of the Soviet Union and CC members,

only 5% of the Communist rank-and-file members in 1925 had attended university (Mawdsley and White 2000, 246).

The Bolshevik elites of 1917-24 were often contrasted to the later generations of Soviet politicians, who were considered to be low-educated "organisers and administrators" (Mosse 1968). From the perspective of formal qualification, the proportion of CC members with a university degree had increased from 40% to almost 50% by the mid-1930s, while the proportion of members with secondary education remained the same (Mawdsley and White 2000, 55). In the same period, only 10% of the delegates for Congresses of People's Deputies had studied at a university, while another 31% of delegates had received secondary education (Mawdsley and White 2000, 55).

The Soviet elites in the late Stalin years were even better educated than the Bolshevik elites. More importantly, a dominance of elites with technical education in the Soviet politics originated in the 1930s (Farmer 1992, 207-10; Fitzpatrick 1979). Industrialisation increased the demand for graduates with degrees in the technical and natural sciences. This demand was primarily satisfied by a "fast-track" education in these areas. "Most famous were the 'thousanders', individuals benefiting from organized recruitment by the central authorities and trade unions and sent to engineering, agriculture, education, and military institutes, with the emphasis now on very rapid education, in keeping with the tempo of the Five Year Plan" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 114; also Hanley et al. 1995, 642). Most importantly, the well-educated technocrats (Fitzpatrick 1979, 204) preferred to stay in academia or production rather than move into politics (Bailes 1978, 431-41). During the 1930s, a system of vocational education for prospective elite members was established through the rabfaks (workers faculties) and these became increasingly popular (Mawdsley and White 2000, 249).

The rise in educational status and the 'technocratisation' of Soviet elites were even more intense under Khrishchev and Brezhnev. 24% of Peoples' Congress delegates had received a technical degree by the end of the 1950s, and this proportion increased to 94% in 1981 (Mawdsley and White 2000, 114, 173). Generally, an educational degree in the technical or natural sciences became a prerequisite for a position in the Soviet party or state apparatus. At the same time, the 'cadre stability' policy introduced by Brezhnev forced many prospective party or state candidates to remain in academia or production (Hanley et al. 1995, 645).

Under Gorbachev, the proportion of university graduates among Soviet elites continued to increase (Hanley et al. 1995, 655). Approximately 70% of the elites had attended university (Mawdsley and White 2000, 206). The tendency towards technical education remained; more than 70% of the Soviet nomenklatura studied technical or administrative studies at universities, while only 25% were educated in the humanities (Hanley et al. 1995, 655). In comparison to the late Soviet nomenklatura, even more members among the 1993 elites had ob-

tained a technical education (approximately 86%), while less had obtained a degree in the humanities (some 10%) (Hanley et al. 1995, 655).

The educational level of political elites has continued to increase after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Over the four parliaments, an average of 96% of parliamentarians had obtained a university degree, and all cabinet ministers between 1991-2011 and all governors between 1991-2010 had at least one university degree. It is not surprising that political elites are better educated than the general population and rank-and-file members (Coleman and Azrael 1965), but the magnitude of highly educated recruits is still impressive. A university degree has become a de facto prerequisite for obtaining any elite position.

Hanley et al. (1995, 655) suggested that

> the deinstitutionalisation of the Communist Party in all probability eliminated channels that once allowed politically loyal individuals with little technical training to advance into positions of managerial authority. The demise of the Party appears to have closed off entry into the elite for all except those with some form of technical training.

It is of interest to evaluate whether the educational trends identified have persisted and are still applicable to the elites of post-communist parliaments.

As with the Soviet elites, the largest proportion of parliamentarians had received a degree in the technical and natural sciences, engineering, or medicine. They represented between 51% (first term) and 56% (fourth term) of post-communist MPs. The popularity of an education in social sciences, humanities, and economy has boomed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Approximately 42% of Russian MPs had studied in these fields, and their proportion has increased over post-Communist period. The lowest proportion of MPs attained a law degree (i.e., an average of 14% over four legislative terms) and this proportion has gradually decreased over time. With regard to education, Russian MPs differ from their West European counterparts of whom the majority had studied economics, social sciences, and humanities (Gaxie and Godmer 2007, 119-123).

Law graduates represented the lowest proportion of ministers and governors (roughly 13 and 5% respectively). Approximately 35% of governors and nearly 30% of ministers studied economics or another social science. Almost the same proportion of ministers studied engineering or a natural science, including medicine, and more than one half of governors held a degree in engineering.

Historical continuities may also be observed in the educational profile of post-Soviet political elites. Technocrats remained the dominant group both among the parliamentarians and governors. The educational profile of ministers has included both social and technical sciences, which may be explained by the high degree of specialisation.

In general, the average member of the Soviet and post-Soviet political elite was male, an ethnic Russian, middle-aged, and highly educated. The slight

differences among elite subgroups were the consequences of different selectorates and selection criteria. The analysis reveals the structural similarities between Soviet and post-Soviet political elites with regard to their socio-demographic profiles. This finding underlines the low social mobility of certain groups. From the perspective of structural reproduction, the question of individual reproduction arises, i.e., whether former Soviet politicians remained in politics.

Individual Reproduction of Soviet Elites. Parliamentarians as a Case Study

An analysis of Soviet political experience showed that hardly any post-Soviet politicians had been open opponents of the Soviet regime. Approximately 40% of post-Soviet ministers had held a national-level rank in the Soviet *nomenklatura*, and more than half had played some regional political role during the Soviet period. Similarly, more than 60% of governors had held a high-ranking position at the local or regional level during the Soviet period, while approximately 26% were members of the national *nomenklatura*. Over the four parliaments, one third of MPs had held a high position at the local and regional level. One quarter of MPs had held a party leadership position in the CPSU. Approximately 3% of post-Soviet MPs had held a ministerial position in the Soviet Union. Almost 15% of MPs had been former Soviet parliamentarians and 17% had held a national *nomenklatura* position. Both proportions decreased over time.

It is evident that the circulation of political elites was incomplete, as many post-Soviet politicians belonged to the Soviet ruling class. Therefore, it is important to assess the effect of Soviet political experience on an individual's chances of surviving in post-Soviet Russia. For this purpose, the careers of Russian MPs were studied using logistic regression. The dependent binary variable indicated whether an MP belonged to the group of long-standing MPs (i.e., those who had served three or more legislative terms). The independent variables included types of Soviet political experience and the occupational experience of MPs. Socio-demographic characteristics of MPs were used as control variables.

In general, the more political experience an MP had gained during Soviet era, the higher the chance of remaining in the State Duma for three or more terms. MPs with a high degree of Soviet political experience had a 1.3 times greater chance of becoming incumbents. Specifically, former national nomenklatura members had a 1.8 greater chance of serving in the Russian parliament for three or more terms. In general, former national nomenklatura members had often gained leading experience in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in Soviet governments ($r=0.15$, $p<0.000$) and in Soviet quasi-parliaments ($r=0.22$, $p<0.000$).

An occupational background in business, however, decreased the chances of staying in parliament for three or more terms by 1.4 times. Incumbent MPs recruited from business gained more experience at the regional level and in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union than MPs with other occupational backgrounds. In contrast, they had seldom held any national *nomenklatura* positions.

The analysis of parliamentary incumbency based on personal characteristics of MPs corresponds with the existing body of literature. Former Soviet politicians survived the collapse of Communism and adapted to the new conditions (Kryshtanovskaya and White 1996). The most successful politicians were those who had held positions at the national level (e.g., ministry departments and party apparatuses). These positions allowed for the development of expertise in a certain area and required party loyalty. Furthermore, the majority of national nomenklatura members had gained other types of experience, thereby increasing the degree of their specialisation, their political knowledge, and network accumulation. These people built the backbone of the Soviet parliament and contributed to the direction in which Russian parliamentarism has developed (Remington 2001). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these politicians apparently preferred to move to parliament, rather than business. This finding is supported by the fact that MPs recruited from business had seldom gained national nomenklatura experience.

In Russia, parliamentary work is less attractive than work in the economic sphere. This is not only due to financial differences between salaries in politics and economy, but also to the declining role of the parliament in the Russian political system. During the 1990s, the parliament was a place for intense debates between the Lefts (who controlled parliament) and pro-presidential forces. The end of Yeltsin's presidency was marked by the appointment of Vladimir Putin, the victory of the pro-presidential party "Unity (Bear)" and the pro-government party "Fatherland-All Russia", and low public support for oppositional parties with liberal ideologies. The 2003 parliament elected under Putin had already been dominated by the new party "United Russia", which was built by merging the "Unity" and "Fatherland-All Russia" as well as MPs from other parliamentary groups. Since then, the role of parliament has substantially decreased. The strategy of "United Russia" to recruit celebrities via their party list has also contributed to the decrease in professionalisation and thus in the prestige of a parliamentary seat.

In the early 1990s, no legal regulation and opportunities for institutional lobbying of business interests were provided for the emerging economical class. The economic developments of the early 1990s led to the coining of the term "Komsomol economy", which refers to the young Soviet politicians (i.e., Komsomol members) who obtained the right to participate in business activities (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2005). Although the 'Komsomol economy' was under strict control of the Communist Party, it enjoyed great privilege,

while economic activities of all other social and political groups were prohibited by law. Deposit auctions (i.e., a scheme used for the privatisation of big enterprises in the early 1990s) helped turn former Komsomol members into oligarchs.

The political power of economic conglomerates was the highest during the two presidential terms of Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999), during which they participated in decision-making and formed political landscape by organising parties and movements across the ideological spectrum (Krystanovskaja 2004). In the media, the second Yeltsin term was often referred to as "semibankirshchina", i.e. the power of seven bankers who greatly contributed to the re-election of the president.

Legal regulations of economic activities, tax payments for enterprises that were privatised in the 1990s, and the arrest and following trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky (one of the oligarchs) are all factors contributing to the reduced role of economic elites in the decision-making process after Putin's election, although the influence of Putin' clan (i.e., businessmen and state officials affiliated with the president) should have increased (Kosals 2007).

In general, the representation of businessmen in parliament increased throughout the post-Soviet period. In 2003, approximately 44% of MPs had an occupational background in business. The largest proportion of MPs with a business background was recruited by the pro-presidential parties. In single-member districts they were recruited as independent MPs. Due to party switching, the pro-presidential party, "United Russia", had an increased proportion of businessmen (50%) in 2003. In Russia, businessmen generally aim for proximity to power elites, especially the president. The only difference is that under Yeltsin, entry channels to the president were more open, while under Putin's policy of 'equal distancing', many businessmen had to use an intermediate channel, the "United Russia".

In summary, individual reproduction was prominent. These findings partly correspond to the existing research (Szelényi and Szelényi 1995). In contrast to the expectations formulated by Szelényi, we also found some circulation of elites as some nomenklatura members were excluded from the new political class. The analysis showed that intra-elite circulation occurred (e.g., national nomenklatura members moved to parliament, while former local and regional politicians switched to business or state bureaucracy). If a relationship between political experience and survival chances exists, it would be interesting to investigate whether different elite sub-groups preferred different career paths.

Continuities in the Career Paths of Political Elites

The Bolshevik elites were generalists. Elite members working at the national level were usually reassigned to the regional level, and then back again. Cross-overs between party and state apparatus positions were also widespread during

the 1920s and 1930s. The *nomenklatura* system, which would regulate the political and state careers of millions, originated in this period of Soviet history (Farmer 1992; Harasymiw 1969).

The increasing complexity of political and party institutions was accompanied by a decreased demand for generalists. The elites of the CC became more specialised in the late 1930s. At the same time, crossover between ministerial, territorial party, and military positions substantially decreased (Mawdsley and White 2000, 102). For example, "taking the late Stalinist elite as a group, there were only three cases of territorial party secretaries moving to state ministerial posts, and apparently no cases of change in the other direction" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 102). At the end of Stalin's rule, the majority of military leaders had attended specialised academies and collected wartime experience, while the typical career paths of state ministers involved specialised technical training and practical experience in factories or lower-level positions in related ministries. In contrast, the territorial party secretaries had seldom obtained specialised education, "although their main experience had been at this same, republic or regional, level" (Mawdsley and White 2000, 102-3).

During Brezhnev's rule, recruitment to the *nomenklatura* followed a pattern of "vertical promotion within a single institutional arena" (Hanley et al. 1995, 649). Crossover between party and state positions was often at the regional level, although this tended to inhibit career advancement (Farmer 1992, 198-9). Similarly, crossover between economic positions (e.g., enterprise directors and managers) and high-ranking state or party positions was relatively rare (Hanley et al. 1995, 649-50).

Under Gorbachev, these channels of recruitment were not destroyed; rather, "vertical promotion within organisational hierarchies remained the modal route of entry into the elite" (Hanley et al. 1995, 650). Newly recruited *nomenklatura* members had usually occupied administrative positions below the *nomenklatura* level within the state and party apparatuses or the state economy. For example, approximately 63% of the 1988 *nomenklatura* members had held similar positions in 1983; moreover, some 67% of them remained in the same institutional arena (Hanley et al. 1995, 651). Lateral movements increased under Gorbachev; some 33% of the 1988 *nomenklatura*, mainly the state enterprise directors, moved to the state bureaucracy. The *nomenklatura* members who switched from one institutional arena to another between 1983 and 1988 also preferred to remain in the state apparatus (Hanley et al. 1995, 651).

As in the Soviet Union, Russian executive bodies were predominantly formed via internal recruitment (Lane and Ross 1994, 20). The majority of post-Soviet cabinet ministers had held a high-ranking position (i.e., junior minister) in national ministries. Compared to the late Soviet period, however, the respective proportion of internally recruited ministers decreased, averaging 55%. A position at the regional level in Russia was a springboard to a gubernatorial position. Approximately 40% of governors were internally recruited

within regional governments, while another 37% had been elected from regional parliaments. In contrast, less than 10% of parliamentarians were recruited within the State Duma.

In post-Soviet Russia, there were little crossover between cabinet and parliamentary careers. From 1991 to 2011, approximately 13% of cabinet members were State Duma legislators, while only 7% of MPs had gained cabinet experience before their first election to parliament. Roughly 10% of cabinet ministers had prior experience in regional parliaments. Crossover between ministerial and gubernatorial careers was also seldom. Approximately one in six cabinet ministers had held a position in regional government before their appointment, while roughly 8% of governors were cabinet ministers before they were appointed to office. In contrast to a ministerial career, a gubernatorial career represents an integrated career path across the regional and national levels as well as between legislative and executive branches. It also connects parliamentary and gubernatorial positions. Approximately 30% of governors gained political experience in the national parliament (in the Council of Federation and the State Duma).

An analysis of political careers over the post-Soviet period indicated continuity with the Soviet tradition of political specialisation. In an analysis of the political careers of administrative elites in the Soviet Union, Farmer (Farmer 1992, 199) underlined that "frequent crossing over between party and state posts inhibits mobility... Careers destined for ultimate success tend to be confined mainly to one channel or the other". Post-Soviet political careers have differed in their degree of specialisation. The most distinct career path is one toward a cabinet position, which usually starts at the national level and includes work in ministries. This path also involves a high degree of internal promotion and a low degree of crossover between gubernatorial and parliamentary careers. A gubernatorial career, which usually starts at the regional level, also entails a relatively high level of internal recruitment. This career path involves more crossover than a cabinet career path, being particularly attractive for national MPs. A parliamentary career in the State Duma is quite obscure. Many MPs start their political careers directly upon election to parliament. This career path is unattractive for both former cabinet members and governors, and a negligible proportion of internally recruited candidates choose to follow it.

The explanation of these developments includes many factors. Cabinet careers, being the most specialised of political careers, had not undergone many changes after the collapse of Communism. Although transition meant the end of careers for many Soviet ministers, the second line of ministerial employees were not greatly affected by the regime changes. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, administrative experience and expertise in certain areas facilitated a smooth transition for ministry employees. Specialisation was considered more valuable for a career within ministries than party loyalty. This assumption

is also supported by the fact that the majority of post-Soviet ministers were not party-affiliated.

The high proportion of internally recruited candidates called into question the role of patronage in the advancement of ministerial careers. Recruitment systems that are more or less closed for external contenders are prone to the development of personal loyalties, which may be rewarded with career advancement (Farmer 1992). This results in the widespread promotion of less experienced, but loyal candidates, as well as the retention of ineffective elite members, which was evident in the Soviet *nomenklatura* system (Harasymiw 1969). The analysis of ministerial appointments in Russia reveals an important role of the president in career advancement. President Boris Yeltsin appointed a large number of ministers with whom he had been personally familiar as a CPSU leader prior to 1989. Similarly, President Vladimir Putin appointed many contacts he had made while holding political positions in St. Petersburg during the 1990s; veterans of the St. Petersburg regional government built a noticeable group among post-Soviet ministers (approximately 10%), including former President Dimitri Medvedev. Furthermore, personal acquaintance with the president and the possibility of developing loyalties could be achieved through working in the presidential administration. Indeed, approximately 6% of ministers had gained this type of experience before their appointment to cabinet, while some 7% of ministers were appointed to the presidential administration at the end of their term.

Being less specialised compared to a cabinet career, a gubernatorial career in post-Soviet Russia also followed the Soviet pattern. The majority of governors started and pursued their careers at the regional level. For this career path, presidential patronage was of greater importance than for a ministerial career because, after the collapse of Communism, governors of virtually all Russian regions were personally appointed by Boris Yeltsin. These appointments were only meant to be temporary and to help increase support for the president in the respective regions. The bulk of appointed governors, however, were able to accumulate electoral and political capital and win the first regional elections. As a rule, governors elected in the first years after the collapse of the Soviet Union remained in power for many terms. Although a gubernatorial career in post-Soviet Russia lasted an average of 6 years (i.e., 1.5 terms), some regional careers continued for more than 15 years (e.g., Yuriy Luzhkov in Moscow and Anatoliy Lisitsin in Yaroslavskaya Oblast). The tenure of governors in the so-called ethnic regions was even longer (e.g., Mintimer Shaymiyev served 19 years in the Tatarstan Republic; Kirsan Ilyumzhinov served approximately 18 years in the Kalmyk Republic; and Murtaza Rakhimov served 17 years in the Bashkortostan Republic). In 2004, however, gubernatorial elections were abolished by President Vladimir Putin, thereby ending many long-term careers and changing the structure of opportunities for regional elites. The candidates for a gubernatorial seat are now selected by the president and recommended to the

regional parliament, which votes for the proposed candidates. The patronage power of the head of the state has even increased through these measures. Now, the president may not only indirectly appoint governors, but he also possesses the power to dismiss his appointee, and is only required to provide vague justifications such as 'breach of trust'.

Finally, parliamentary careers in post-Soviet Russia were rather episodic. The Congresses of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviets were powerless and unprofessional bodies; the majority of deputies worked part-time, parliamentary groups were built on the territorial principle and not on the party basis, and standing committees were less specialised (Remington 2001). Therefore, a professional, full-time legislative career had to be built from the ground up. Of course, there has been a group of politicians who had gained some political experience before their elections to parliament and possess specific expertise. These professional politicians built a mainstay of MPs with three or more mandates and had often served on a particular committee without any changes. A modest 30% of MPs had held some kind of party position before entering parliament, and this proportion was stable throughout the post-Soviet period. Moreover, approximately the same proportion of MPs had gained some political experience at the local or regional level, while one in six MPs were politically active as regional parliamentarians before their election to the State Duma. The bulk of post-Soviet MPs, however, were political novices. They easily entered parliament and also easily left to other job sectors, primarily business (Semenova 2011). The high volatility of political personnel, widespread party switching (it was forbidden before the 2007 elections), frequent re-organisation of parliamentary party groups, and the constant increase in the number of standing committees are all factors that hindered the professionalisation of parliamentary elites. Patronage also played a role in legislative career advancement, but the main patrons were the pro-presidential parties that were installed in every electoral term. These parties attracted MPs from all other party groups, but primarily independent parliamentarians elected in single-member constituencies. In general, the role of parliament has decreased over time and it has been controlled by pro-presidential forces since 2003. A parliamentary career path, which had to be planned after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has developed into a short-term option for politicians with specific and particular interests. From this viewpoint, a parliamentary career in post-Soviet Russia had some similarities to that of the Soviet period. Both were short-lived, had a nominal character (the former Speaker of the State Duma, Boris Gryzlov, said that the parliament is not a place for debates, but for professional work) and were less attractive compared to other career paths, both inside and outside of political sphere.

Conclusion

The development of political elites in post-Soviet Russia was path-dependent. We identified a partial reproduction of the political elite. This type of reproduction may be defined as reproduction circulation, which is "positionally narrow and socially shallow in scope, but gradual and peaceful in mode" (Higley and Lengyel 2000, 5). With respect to its scope, it is narrow because the high-ranking persons were primarily replaced, while fewer personnel changes were made within a wide range of lower positions. It is socially shallow because no great changes occurred in the social profiles of elites after the end of Communism.

It would be interesting to investigate why these path dependencies survived the end of the Soviet Union, although the institutional framework has changed and a pronounced amount of newcomers entered the political sphere. We found three forms of path dependency. The first form is structural reproduction that is evident in continuities of the socio-demographic profile of political elites. The average member of the Soviet and post-Soviet political elite was male, an ethnic Russian, middle-aged, and highly educated. The slight differences among elite subgroups, i.e. cabinet members, parliamentarians and governors, were the consequence of different selectorates and selection criteria. The structural reproduction indicates low social mobility and strong social stratification in Russia. These continuities also might be rooted in Russian political culture as the disadvantages of certain social groups had persisted over decades of Soviet domination and throughout post-Soviet period.

The second-strongest form of path dependency is functional reproduction that was found in career paths of political elites. Cabinet careers were the most specialised and were required to gain administrative experience and expertise in certain areas before appointment. Because of the noticeable proportion of internally recruited candidates, ministerial career paths were prone to the development of personal loyalties, particularly presidential patronage. In comparison to cabinet career paths, a gubernatorial career was less specialised and pursued at the regional level. Presidential patronage was of greater importance than for cabinet careers, and it has even increased after the abolishment of gubernatorial elections in 2004. Parliamentary careers in post-Soviet Russia, however, were rather episodic. The bulk of post-Soviet MPs entered the parliament without any political experience and they remained for only a short period. For MPs, the pro-presidential parties played the role of the major patron.

An analysis of career continuities did not support our expectations with regard to re-establishment of *nomenklatura* selection mechanisms in post-Soviet period. It showed, however, that functional equivalents to the *nomenklatura* system were applied and they shaped the career paths of political elites, particularly those of cabinet and gubernatorial bodies. The major aim of these

functional equivalents is to secure patronage principles of the formation of political elites.

Finally, individual reproduction was prominent. In general, the more political experience MPs had gained during Soviet era, the higher the chances of becoming incumbents. Former national *nomenklatura* members had the best chances of staying in the State Duma for three of more terms, while an occupational background in business substantially decreased the chances of becoming a long-standing MP. The analysis showed that intra-elite circulation occurred (e.g., national *nomenklatura* members moved to parliament, while former local and regional politicians switched to business or state bureaucracy). The Soviet political elite sometimes experienced inter-elite positional changes in order to survive. Some elite members did not find a suitable position and were excluded. This type of reproduction is the least strong and less persistent. Although it represents the result of selection process and occurs within the specific institutional framework, it is dependent on the resources of a certain person (e.g., finance, specific knowledge, or a specific position within political networks). Consequently, this reproduction should decrease over time, while functional and structural reproduction are likely to remain.

Further research on the survival of cabinet members and governors will contribute to a better understanding of how Soviet political experience affects the career duration of political elite sub-groups. With regard to patronage and its role in the shaping of political careers, network analysis of political elites is the best method.

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